



Iowa Status

common, native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

chara

Chara spp.

Kingdom: Protista
Division/Phylum: Chlorophyta

Features

Chara is a type of green algae that is made of a series of "giant cells." These cells may be several inches long. It is branched and feels bristly or gritty. This yellow or grayish-green protist has a musky odor. Chara is attached to the bottom by rootlike structures called rhizoids. Leaf-like structures, attached at regular intervals, are whorled around the stem.

Natural History

Chara grows attached to the bottom in ponds, lakes, streams, and brackish waters. It provides habitat for other species and sediment stabilization. The male and female reproductive structures are produced at the nodes. Chara produces its own food, which is stored as starch.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; natural lakes and prairie marshes; wet prairies and fens; bottomland forests